

## GOA READY TO TAKE PART IN MOCK DRILL TODAY

Panjim, Vasco, Dabolim and Mormugao to witness exercises aimed at preparing citizens for 'new and complex' threats

Team Herald

**PANJIM:** Preparations were underway in Goa on Tuesday for nationwide civil defence mock drills scheduled for today. The drills will primarily be conducted in Panjim and parts of Vasco, Dabolim, and the harbour area in Mormugao taluka.

Speaking to reporters at Mantralaya in Porvorim, Chief Minister Pramod Sawant said, "A video conference meeting chaired by the Union Home Secretary was held with the Chief Secretary, Collectors, and the Revenue Secretary, during which locations were finalised. In South Goa, Mormugao, Vasco, and Dabolim have been selected, and in North Goa, Panjim will participate in the mock drill. Plans will be prepared involving Civil Defence Services such as the NCC, NSS, Home Guards, Apda Mitra, and the general public."

South Goa District Administration has informed that a mock drill will be organised from 4 pm onwards. For any queries, the District Control Room

can be contacted at 0832-2794100/2794223.

The CM recalled that a similar drill had been conducted in 1971 during the India-Pakistan war that led to the creation of Bangladesh. "This initiative is being undertaken to sensitise people and keep them alert. Both district administrations are making preparations. The Home Ministry and the Revenue Ministry are on high alert."

Meanwhile, Goa Police issued a statement warning against a fake advisory message being circulated on social media. "It has come to our notice that a false advisory is being circulated online, falsely claiming to be an official communication. The content is misleading and intended to create unnecessary panic. Spreading or forwarding such fake messages is a punishable offence under the law. We urge all citizens to remain calm, verify facts, and rely only on official channels of the Goa Police for accurate updates," the statement said.

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### CIVIL DEFENCE MOCK DRILLS – WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

These drills will be conducted across **300 'civil defence' districts on May 7** to test wartime readiness

#### WHY ARE MOCK DRILLS BEING HELD?

- In response to April 22 Pahalgam terror attack in J&K, which killed 26 civilians
- To assess India's civil defence preparedness during high-level national security reviews

#### WHO WILL PARTICIPATE?

- District controllers and local authorities
- Civil defence wardens and home guards
- NCC, NSS, and NYKS volunteers
- School and college students

#### WHAT WILL DRILLS INVOLVE?

- Testing air raid warning systems
- Communicating with Air Force
- Operating control rooms
- Implementing crash blackout measures
- Camouflaging vital infrastructure
- Conducting fire-fighting, rescue, and evacuation
- Training civilians, students, and volunteers in emergency protocols

#### WHAT ARE CITIZENS EXPECTED TO DO?

- Follow instructions from authorities and civil defence teams
- Participate in evacuation drills and awareness sessions
- Cooperate with crash blackout measures and avoid unnecessary lighting
- Stay informed via radio and public announcements
- Avoid spreading rumours
- Assist vulnerable individuals
- Learn basic safety measures in case of air raids or emergencies

#### WHERE ARE THEY BEING HELD IN GOA?

**Panjim (North Goa):** With participation from local emergency services

**Mormugao-Vasco-Dabolim (South Goa):** Port and airports

## Goa school body raises pitch for full-time staff

Goa School Managements' Association says Directorate of Education delaying hirings, pushing for teachers on contract, a move that doesn't benefit students

Team Herald

**MAPUSA:** The Goa School Managements' Association on Tuesday reiterated its long-standing demand for the sanctioning of full-time teaching and non-teaching staff and called for an end to the appointment of teachers on a contractual basis.

Speaking to media persons at the Dnyanprasad Vidyalaya hall, association action committee convenor Prashant Naik alleged that for the past three years, the Directorate of Education has been adopting delaying tactics in sanctioning full-time staff in government-aided schools.

Naik said school managements are being denied approval to fill posts on a regular basis, which is affecting the functioning of schools. "Certain preferred managements are granted permissions to fill posts on regular or full-time basis," he alleged.

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**"I am the chairman of Shri Nirakar Education Society at Maxem, Canacona which caters to 95 per cent of students belonging to ST communities. For the last three years we are not sanctioned regular posts and it is impacting student learning outcomes"**

**– Prashant Naik, action committee convenor, Goa School Managements' Association**

which caters to 95 per cent of students belonging to ST communities. For the last three years we are not sanctioned regular posts and it is impacting student learning outcomes," Naik said.

The association has been raising this issue since the start of the last academic year, but their demands have fallen on deaf ears. Naik pointed out that earlier, when a teacher retired and a vacancy arose, school managements would write to the Directorate of Edu-

cation and receive permission to fill the post within a month. But now the whole process has become selective, he said.

School managements are of the view that teachers and non-teaching staff appointed on a contractual basis are often in search of permanent positions elsewhere, leading to a lack of continuity. They stressed that all vacant posts must be filled before the start of the new academic year in June 2025 to ensure the smooth functioning of schools and in the best interest of students.

Naik demanded that school managements be allowed to apply directly to the Directorate of Education and that full-time staff be sanctioned to eligible schools. He also urged the State government to implement the recommendations of two State-appointed committees on the grants-in-aid pattern and the Goa Schools Education Act and Rules.

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## Hurrah for diaspora: 2 Goans elected Australian MPs

Team Herald

**PANJIM:** Two young members of the Goan diaspora have been elected to the Australian Federal Parliament, bringing pride and recognition to the community in Australia as well as across the globe. **Zaneta Mascarenhas** and **Leon Rebello** won in their respective constituencies during the recently held Australian federal elections.

Rebello, aged 30, made history by becoming the youngest Liberal MP in Australia. He will represent the southern Gold Coast seat of McPherson. Rebello's family traces its roots to Verna in South Goa.

Mascarenhas, who is 43, retained her seat for a second consecutive term as MP for Swan in Western Australia, representing the ruling Labour Party. Mascarenhas, who had visited Goa five years ago to attend a family function in Benaulum, has spoken with pride about her Goan her-



itage. She has expressed a desire for her children and extended family to stay connected to their cultural roots.

The election of Mascarenhas and Rebello is being hailed as a testament to the talent and commitment of the Goan diaspora and community leaders say their presence in the Australian parliament will serve to amplify the voice and visibility of Goans in international forums.

## Trump admin blocks federal grants to Harvard

**AFP, WASHINGTON:** President Donald Trump's education secretary said Monday that Harvard will no longer receive federal grants, escalating an ongoing battle with the prestigious university as it challenges the funding cuts in court.

The Trump administration has for weeks locked horns with Harvard and other higher education institutions over claims they tolerate anti-Semitism on their campuses — threatening their budgets, tax-exempt status and enrollment of foreign students.

Education Secretary Linda McMahon, in a letter sent to Harvard's president and posted online, said that the university "should no longer seek GRANTS from the federal government, since none will be provided."

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## Union Bank faces scrutiny over Rs 7 cr book purchase

The public sector bank purchased 2 lakh copies of former CEA K V Subramanian's book

**AGENCY, NEW DELHI:** Public sector lender Union Bank of India spent an estimated Rs 7.25 crore to purchase nearly 2,00,000 copies of a book authored by former Chief Economic Adviser (CEA) **Krishnamurthy V Subramanian**, according to a media report. The report comes amid Subramanian's recent exit from his post as India's executive director at the International Monetary Fund (IMF), six months ahead of schedule.

According to internal correspondence cited in the report, the bank's central office ordered 1,89,450 paperback and 10,422 hardcover copies of 'India@100: Envisioning Tomorrow's Economic Powerhouse', to be distributed among customers, corporates, schools, col-



leges and libraries across India. Priced at Rs 350 and Rs 597 respectively, the total procurement cost amounted to over Rs 7 crore.

A 50% advance was paid to Rupa Publications before the book's publication in August 2024, with the rest to be covered through the bank's miscellaneous revenue budget.

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The Vatican Media shows the annulment of the Fisherman's ring and the seal of lead of Pope Francis in The Vatican, on Tuesday

## Cardinals move into Vatican, to go incommunicado

**AFP, VATICAN CITY, HOLY SEE:** Cardinals will on Tuesday begin moving into the Vatican accommodation where they will stay during the conclave, on the eve of their secretive meeting to elect a new pope.

Following the death of Pope Francis on April 21, 133 cardinal electors will gather on Wednesday in the Sistine Chapel for an election that could last hours,

days, or even months.

They normally stay in the Vatican's Santa Marta guesthouse, which has en-suite bathrooms and hotel-style room service, but there are not enough rooms for them all.

With representatives from 70 countries across five continents, this conclave is the largest — and the most international — ever.

As a result, some of the

cardinals will be housed at Santa Marta Vecchia, a building next door usually used to accommodate Vatican officials.

They will be able to access their rooms — assigned by drawing lots — between Tuesday and the mass on Wednesday morning that precedes the conclave.

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MAX. TEMP 35.0 °C  
MIN. TEMP 27.4 °C

idharudhar



Just a typo, sir. It was meant to be 'scheme', not 'scam'!

## Save our fields: Taleigao fire a wake-up call

ANIL MISHRA  
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**PANJIM:** A day after a massive fire engulfed a dry grass field at Cambrabhat, Taleigao — destroying crops, killing reptiles and sending residents fleeing from their homes — locals have expressed serious concern, calling the incident a wake-up call for the authorities.

Juliet Fernandes, who lives next to the field, described the chaos that unfolded. "Our house was filled with smoke. My neighbour told me to get out immediately. I couldn't even pick up my dogs because they were too scared to move. Though the fire has been extinguished, it has left an impact on us," she told O Herald.

In response to the incident,



(Above) Forest Department personnel picking a dead python. (Right) Some of the animals killed in the field



local resident Cecille Rodrigues has written to the Secretary of the Taleigao Village Panchayat, urging the formation of an expert committee to investigate the cause of the fire and propose preventive measures.

"We urge immediate action to tackle the recurring problem of field fires in Taleigao, es-

pecially during the dry months of April and May. We request a committee meeting involving village citizens and relevant departments to work together toward a long-term solution," Rodrigues said.

Fernandes pointed out that fires had occurred in the area earlier too, but none matched

the scale of this incident.

"This time it was too much. Fortunately, my children were not at home. Trees like chickoo, coconut, mango, and jackfruit have all been burnt. It's heart-breaking — we plant these trees with love," said Fernandes.

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**"We urge immediate action to tackle the recurring problem of field fires in Taleigao, especially during the dry months of April and May. We request a panchayat committee meeting involving village citizens and relevant departments to work together toward a long-term solution"**

**– Cecille Rodrigues**

**"The biodiversity of the area is being wiped out. Taleigao is rapidly turning into a concrete jungle. On one hand, ministers talk about creating 'lungs' for the city, while on the other, they allow natural vegetation to be destroyed. This urbanisation is clearly not for Goans"**

**– Mariano Ferrao**

## Cristiano's son named in Portugal U-15s

AFP, LISBON: Cristiano



do Santos, the eldest son of five-time Ballon d'Or winner Cristiano Ronaldo, was called up to the Portugal Under-15 squad for the first time on Tuesday. The 14-year-old, who, like his father, plays for Al-Nassr in Saudi Arabia, has also had spells with Manchester United and Juventus.

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